

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 033895 TOSEC 020001
ORIGIN SS-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /015 R

66011

DRAFTED BY: S/S-O:SGOLDSMITH

APPROVED BY: S/S-O:SGOLDSMITH

-----150932Z 045387 /15

P 150917Z FEB 77 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 033895 TOSEC 020001

LIMDIS

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO WHITE HOUSE, USUN
NEW YORK, CIA WASHDC FROM NEW DELHI FEB 15:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 2215

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DEPARTMENT PASS SENATOR PERCY'S OFFICE FOR MRS. JACOBSEN

DEPARTMENT PASS SECRETARY (ENROUTE)

USUN FOR YOUNG

CIA FOR TURNER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, US

SUBJECT: SENATOR PERCY'S CONVERSATIONS WITH PRIME MINISTER GANDHI

1. SENATOR CHARLES PERCY, WHO WAS IN DELHI AS PART OF THE
DELEGATION TO ATTEND THE FUNERAL OF THE LATE PRESIDENT, HAD AN
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HOURLY LONG CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER GANDHI FEBRUARY 14
ACCOMPANIED BY MRS. PERCY, ALSO A LONG-TIME FRIEND.

FOLLOWING ARE THE MAIN POINTS.

2. THE EMERGENCY: MRS. GANDHI SAID THAT THE MAIN ACHIEVEMENT OF
HER ADMINISTRATION WAS THE IMPROVEMENT IN NATIONAL UNITY AND

CITED THE BRINGING OF THE STATES OF THE NORTHEAST MORE INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF THE COUNTRY. SHE SAID THAT THERE WAS NOW A SENSE OF CONFIDENCE AND STRENGTH. ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR CALLING THE EMERGENCY WAS THAT FOR SEVERAL YEARS BEFORE JUNE 1975 THERE WAS A SENSE OF DEMORALIZATION THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. YOUTH WERE LEAVING AND EVERYONE WAS TRYING TO TAKE WHAT HE COULD; SMUGGLING WAS RAMPANT. ALL THIS HAS COME TO AN END. FOR ALL PURPOSES EXCEPT TWO THE EMERGENCY HAS BEEN LIFTED: ECONOMIC CRIMINALS CONTINUE TO BE DEALT WITH UNDER THE SPECIAL PROVISIONS OF THE EMERGENCY BECAUSE OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE LEGAL SYSTEM, AND TWO ORGANIZATIONS ARE STILL BANNED. ASKED WHAT PROBLEMS ENSUED FROM THE EMERGENCY SITUATION, MRS. GANDHI NOTED THE ENHANCED POWER OF THE POLICE AND BUREAUCRACY AND SAID THAT SHE HAS BEEN DILIGENTLY WORKING TO PREVENT ABUSES. MRS. GANDHI REPEATEDLY SAID THAT SHE WAS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT THE ELECTIONS PER SE BUT RATHER THE BEHAVIOR OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES AFTER ELECTIONS. "THE GENIE HAD NOW BEEN LET OUT OF THE BOTTLE". THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS PARTY WHO DID NOT GET TICKETS FOR PARLIAMENT. SHE NOTED THAT WILD RUMORS WERE BEING CIRCULATED TO DISCREDIT HER GOVT AND CITED THE STORY THAT CHILDREN WERE BEING STERILIZED BY BEING GIVEN INJECTIONS. PROFESSOR P.N. DHAR, THE PRIME MINISTER'S SENIOR ADVISOR WHO WAS PRESENT, SUGGESTED THAT SENATOR PERCY READ THE ECONOMIC PROGRAM OF THE JANATA PARTY. HE SAID IT WAS AN ABSURD PROGRAM AND WOULD DEMONSTRATE WHAT A HODGE-PODGE THE PARTY WAS.

3. FOREIGN AFFAIRS: MRS. GANDHI DESCRIBED INDIA'S IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN AND CHINA AS A "MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH".
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THE SOVIETS UNDERSTOOD THAT INDIA'S IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS WITH CHINA WAS NOT AT THEIR EXPENSE. SIMILARLY, MRS. GANDHI SAID THAT US-INDIA RELATIONS DID NOT AFFECT INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH OTHERS SUCH AS THE SOVIETS. IN THIS CONTEXT, MRS. GANDHI SAID THAT SHE HAD PROBLEMS WITH THE CPI AND IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION SAID THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO TELL TO WHAT EXTENT THE CPI WAS CONTROLLED BY THE USSR. ASKED ABOUT PAKISTAN'S DEVELOPMENT OF A NUCLEAR CAPABILITY, MRS. GANDHI ANSWERED, "HOW FAR ALONG ARE THEY?" AND LEFT THE MATTER AT THAT. SENATOR PERCY RAISED THE QUESTION OF THE CIA AND ASSURED MRS. GANDHI THAT HE HAD RECEIVED ASSURANCES FROM THE HIGHEST AUTHORITIES THAT THERE WAS NO CIA INTERVENTION IN INDIA.

4. SENATOR PERCY EXPLAINED PRESIDENT CARTER'S POLICY OF HAVING THE USG SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THAT THERE SHOULD BE HARMONY BETWEEN THE CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE, SOMETHING WHICH HAD BEEN LACKING PREVIOUSLY. THE SENATOR EXPLAINED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD MET AT LENGTH WITH THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE. THE SENATOR ASSURED THE PRIME MINIS-

TER THAT THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO TILT IN US POLICY TOWARD THE
SUB-CONTINENT.

5. IN CLOSING, MRS. GANDHI EXPRESSED PLEASURE WITH THE ELECTION
OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND APPRECIATION FOR THE DELEGATION
WHICH HE SENT TO ATTEND THE LATE RESIDENT'S FUNERAL. SHE ALSO
APPRECIATED THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT PUBLISHED IN FEBRUARY14
INDIAN PRESS, REPORTED SEPTEL.

6. COMMENT: MRS. GANDHI WAS VERY FRIENDLY AND FORTHCOMING IN HER
COMMENTS AND THOROUGHLY IN COMMAND. SHE SUFFERS FROM SKIN
ERUPTIONS ON HER FACE, AND A TICK IN HER RIGHT EYE WAS NOTED,
BUT THESE DID NOT APPEAR TO TROUBLE HER.
END COMMENT.

7. SENATOR AND MRS. PERCY MET PRIVATELY WITH MRS. GANDHI THE
PREVIOUS EVENING, FEBRUARY 13. ACCORDING TO THE SENATOR, THE
PRIME MINISTER SEEMED MUCH MORE OUTGOING AND FRANK, BUT PESSIMIS-
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TIC ABOUT HER OWN POLITICAL SITUATION. SHE WAS PARTICULARLY
CONCERNED ABOUT HER SON SANJAY, MAINTAINING THAT SHE WAS NOT
ENVISIONING HIM AS A SUCCESSOR. SHE SAID THAT SHE DID NOT FEEL
SHE COULD ACCOMPLISH IT, EVEN IF SHE WISHED.

8. CLEARED BY SENATOR PERCY IN DRAFT.

9. FOR DEPARTMENT: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE Laterally AS APPROPRIATE.
SCHNEIDER UNQUOTE HARTMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 15-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE033895
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O:SGOLDSMITH
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770053-0347
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770240/aaaabjaa.tel
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Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Message ID: 24364bc6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3317447
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SENATOR PERCY'S CONVERSATIONS WITH PRIME MINISTER GANDHI
TAGS: PFOR, OREP, IN, US, (PERCY, CHARLES H), (GANDHI, INDIRA)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/24364bc6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009